

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, May 13, 1898, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Beinn Bhreagh, C. B. Friday, May 13, 1898. JOURNAL

Walked up mountain — examined all the lambs carefully. One black lamb a beautiful creature with glossy wool, quite unlike ordinary black wool. Examined it closely and found the wool very fine — not coarse — and with long fibres. Examined its ancestry and find that its great grandfather was my four-nippled Merino Nam (M405). It is a black Merino lamb! Wool perfectly unique. The mother too, (a white awe) has good Merino wool. We have three sheep with Merino blood in them — a two-year old — a yearling (both white — and this black lamb — all females.

If we can get a ram from this breed — we can improve the wool of the whole flock without injuring nipples and etc. We can produce a new variety of black wool — that can be made a distinguishing mark of the Beinn Bhreagh Flock.

Mr. Gwillem has been failing all winter and is in a very bad way now. I called on Mrs. Gwillem this evening. She is writing to you to thank you for dresses for the children. I know she is in distress. Can't we do something for her? I don't know whether it would do for you to send her a cheque — but I am sure she needs money badly. Shall I ask her to do some work for me?

Maud McKeen was engaged to Mr. Norwood but I hear that the gentleman has transferred his allegiance to Ethel 2 with Maud's consent. Maud is going to a hospital in New York in August to study nursing.

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Mr. Ellis arrived this evening — is staying in town tonight with the Macdougals. I am anxious to have him set up my telescope right away. I went down to the Observatory the same night we arrived — in the dark — and stumbled on soft earth near it. Looking down carefully with the aid of a match — I saw a fresh proof of your love and thoughtfulness for me — a bed of pansies in bloom.

A newspaper will be started in Baddeck soon. Why might not the Ladies' Club help it along, and have its proceedings with selected papers published in it. This would surely prove a great stimulus to original composition — and would also help the paper — for the friends of the Authoresses would buy copies of the paper? Why might not there be one or perhaps two columns reserved for the Ladies' Club — and a Lady Editor appointed to look after it? Copies of the Ladies' part might be struck off separately on pamphlet sized pages — and at the end of the year these could be bound with pasteboard back — and issued to members of the Club — as the Proceedings of the Club — with selected papers. How do you like this idea? Cheap — simple — effective.

Your telegram announcing the Fall of San Juan received. This is good news but the reported arrival of the Spanish Fleet at Martinique just at this juncture is unfortunate.

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Sampson's Fleet can hardly have been as fortunate as Dewey's. Hardly likely that it can have reduced powerful fortifications without some injury to itself. If Sampson's Fleet has been crippled, it would be unfortunate to have the Spanish Fleet pounce down upon it now.

It had been expected that the Flying Squadron would unite wi th Sampson's Fleet in attacking the Spanish Squadron, but if the latter is at Martinique it can reach Porto Rico long before the Flying Squadron can get there. The combined American Fleet is not too powerful for the work it has to do. It will be most unfortunate if the whole Spanish Fleet

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should attack a portion only — of the American Fleet — and that portion probably crippled by its attack on Porto Rico.

The American Fleet is scattered. The Oregon out of reach to the South — the Flying Squadron too far away at Hampton Roads. I fear the developments of the next few days. The great point however in our favor is that Sampson has captured the Spanish base of supplies — if he can only hold on — until reinforcements come — the war will have a quick end in an American Victory. But if the Spaniards can attack our fleet in detail while scattered — we may meet with disaster.

AGB.